

Statement on House Bill 167

My name is Jack Puckett and I live in Missoula. I'm here representing Travelers' Rest State Park and myself as a long term volunteer at the Park. I have a great interest in the history of both this area and the State of Montana.

For thousands of years, before the exploration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Park Site was used as a camp site by Native Americans to trade and as a resting place before heading east to buffalo or west to the salmon streams of the Columbia. This area was a cross road of trails both north and south and east and west. Salish tribal history recounts their meeting with the Corps of Discovery and their use of the Park site. The Nez Perce Trail or Lolo Trail, if you will, was the one Lewis and Clark followed west to the Pacific. These trails preceded routes US 93 and US 12, the Lewis and Clark Highway, that are now major highways that bisect the area. Mullen looked at the area while surveying a road from Fort Benton to Walla Walla, Washington. The Northern Pacific Railroad surveyed and started construction through the area.

The need to provide for the continuation and interpretation of the tribal and exploration history is both in the interest of the state and the many Park visitors. With the advent of a new facility the time is ripe to secure not only the present work that is being carried out but for the future as well by passing HB-167.